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Report of the Working Group meeting on the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for the Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s

TABLE OF CONTENT

		Paragraphs
A.	Attendance and Organization of Work	1-6
B.	Agenda.....	7
C.	Opening Address.....	8-13
D.	Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s: Principles and Objectives.....	14-15
E.	Review of African Statistical Development, 1960-1990	16-86
F.	Strategy for Statistical Development	87-150
G.	Implementation of Strategy	151-182
H.	Other Business	183-187
I.	Adoption of the Report	188

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Working Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was held from 16-20 July 1991 at the Headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Nairobi, Kenya. The Opening Address by Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, was read, on his behalf, by Mr. Robin Andrianasolo, Chief, Statistics Division of the UNECA.

2. Attending the meeting were the heads of national statistical offices of the following countries or their representatives: Botswana, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia, Zaire, and Zimbabwe. Also participating in the meeting as users of statistical data were the Director of planning of Cameroon and a Senior Economist in the Ministry of Planning of Kenya.

3. The Directors of the following STPA and associate centres also attended the meeting: Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC), Dar-es-Salaam, ***Centre européen de formation des statisticiens-économistes des pays en voie de développement*** **(CESD-Paris)**, Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Kampala, Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan, and Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for developing countries.

4. A number of United Nations Agencies as well as bilateral and multilateral institutions sent representatives to the meeting. These were: the UN Statistical Office, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the ***Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*** **(INSEE)**, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), United Kingdom, the Statistics Sweden, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), the African Development Bank (ADB), and the African Statistical Association (AFSA).

5. The ECA Consultant who assisted in the preparation of the draft strategy for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s also participated in the meeting.

6. The meeting elected the following officers:

Chairman : Mr. J.A. Mwaniki, Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kenya.

Vice Chairman : Mr. B. Abdellatif, Chief of Division, Office of Statistics, Morocco, President of the African Statistical Association (AFSA)

Rapporteur : Mr. K.A. Twum-Baah, Deputy Government Statistician, Ghana Statistical Service, Ghana.

B. AGENDA

7. The meeting, agreeing to a flexible time-table that would allow for meaningful discussion but which could also allow for early completion of work, adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening Address
2. Election of Officers
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s; Principles and Objectives
5. Review of African Statistical Development 1960-1990
   - 5.1. History of African Statistical Development 1960-1990
   - 5.2. Review of Technical and Financial Assistance in Africa
   - 5.3. The State of African Statistics in 1990s
   - 5.4. Major Challenges in the 1990s
6. Strategy for Statistical Development
   - 6.1. Strategy at National Level
   - 6.2. Strategy at Regional and Sub-Regional Level
   - 6.3. Strategy at Global Level
7. Implementation of the Strategy
8. Other business
9. Adoption of the Report
10. Closing of the Working Group.

C. OPENING ADDRESS

8. In his message to the working group, the Executive Secretary of ECA was delighted to note that the representatives of African countries as well as those of national and international organizations and agencies were able to attend the meeting despite the changes of its dates and venue. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP for agreeing to host the meeting and

providing the necessary facilities to ensure its success. He also expressed his appreciation to the Kenyan Government for its valuable assistance in the organization of the meeting, particularly through its Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).

9. The Executive Secretary emphasized that the demand for reliable, relevant and timely statistics, needed for proper monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of socio-economic development policies, had increased considerably over the past decade and was still increasing. Therefore, efforts to help African countries to meet these demands would have to be hinged on pragmatic and innovative statistical development strategies at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

10. After highlighting the main principles of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, the Executive Secretary expressed the hope that the conclusions of the deliberations and the strategy which would be formulated by the Working Group would help to lay the foundations for a new era of sustained statistical capacity in Africa in the 1990s.

11. He also pointed out that national statistical offices have greatly benefitted from technical assistance, supported by the donor community and that more of such assistance would still be needed in the 1990s. He appealed to them, therefore, to enhance their support and to work closely with African countries and institutions in the task of statistical capacity building. He emphasized the necessity for the African countries to be allowed to establish their own priorities. In this regard, he called on donor agencies to meet collectively and regularly with national producers and users of statistics to set up statistical priorities and to decide areas requiring assistance.

12. The Executive Secretary then congratulated Mr. K.T. de Graft-Johnson, the ECA Consultant, for the excellent work he had done in the preparation of the draft strategy for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s. He urged the meeting to critically discuss the document and charged the group to come out with practical proposals and recommendations which would constitute the strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in the 1990s.

13. Finally, the Executive Secretary expressed his sincere thanks to the United Nations Development Programme for providing financial support for the meeting and hoped that UNDP will continue and further strengthen its contribution to statistical development in Africa during the period of its fifth programming cycle and beyond.

D. ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA IN THE 1990S: PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

(Agenda Item 4)

14. The Secretariat briefly introduced the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s because the document had been circulated widely. Participants were called upon to examine carefully the principles and objectives of the Plan of Action to see how the recommendations proposed in the document could be implemented. It was stressed that the Working Group was not expected to revise the Plan of Action. Rather, the meeting was to be reminded of the Plan of Action as the background to the assignment of the Consultant and as the goal for which the Working Group was to tackle its assignment. The task before the Working Group, therefore, was to discuss and come out with concrete strategies and implementation programmes which would give meaning to the Plan of Action.

15. Responding to comments from participants, the Secretariat recalled that statistical evaluation reports on African countries were presented to the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, and Demographers in 1990 for discussions before recommendations were proposed to the Ministerial session for adoption. It was noted that the Plan of Action was, necessarily, a document of general statements of principles and objectives.

E. REVIEW OF AFRICAN STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT, 1960-1990

(Agenda Item 5)

16. The Consultant to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Mr. K.T. de Graft-Johnson, who drafted the strategy document, presented an overview of his report. Among the principles he wanted to stress in his study were the need for a historical analysis to reflect the sources of today's problems and the need for acknowledging that African countries were at different states in their statistical development and could thus not be lumped together. He, therefore, cautioned that the report should be seen as a general frame rather than as being specific to countries. He drew the attention of participants to the fact that also cross-cutting issues, such as data processing, were dealt with in various parts of the report.

17. In presenting Part I of the report, he highlighted those topics which he considered particularly pertinent for the understanding of the state of statistics in Africa and/or for further discussions. Regarding Chapter I, he emphasized that contrary to common belief today, National Statistical Services (NSSs) in Africa were, from their inception, demand-driven (at the

time) by the need of the Treasury to have a number of statistical series at their disposal. Progress had undoubtedly been made since then, as African NSSs were no longer largely represented by expatriates but by nationals.

18. In assisting to build up national statistical capabilities, especially through training, the United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral agencies had played a key role.

19. It had to be acknowledged that the timeliness of the data and quality control had suffered over the years, especially when the transition from manual to machine-processing of data was made. This was because local expertise in data processing did not exist and the so-called experts were only feeling their way out. Quality of data was difficult to determine in the absence of long time series data and usefulness or relevance of data was thus the only criterion. Top management should definitely have a stronger role to play in checking data before their release, even though this would be difficult due to the expanded size of offices. Referring to the debate over whether data collection in Africa was determined by supply or demand, he considered it to be premature to call for the abolition of certain data series only because its users were not vocal. Ultimately, the abolition of data would render proof of their usefulness, as then interested groups would state their demand. For example, in one African country, a proposal to discontinue civil aviation statistics was vehemently opposed by the primary users of the data, including the national airline.

20. The Consultant pointed out that in preparing Chapter II on Technical and Financial Assistance in Africa, information had not been readily available, especially not in a sufficiently disaggregated form to allow a detailed analysis of the prevailing criticism of technical assistance, notably that it was mainly directed to expatriate assistance and ultimately lacked in sustainability. Donors were invited to provide further details for amendments.

21. The Consultant then reviewed some technical co-operation programmes, including the African Census Programme (ACP), the World Fertility Survey (WFS), the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Social Dimension of Adjustment (SDA) and concluded that though these projects had achieved some successes, they had not done much in the area of transfer of knowledge and skills.

22. In introducing Chapter III on the State of African Statistics in 1990, the Consultant suggested a categorization of NSSs according to their relative importance in the governmental

hierarchy and structure. In most countries, administrations were inherently conservative and thus reluctant to raise the status of the NSS. He stated that any assessment of the legal framework governing statistical activities, due to different legal systems shaped by the respective colonial power, called for a differentiated approach. There was an urgent need to improve the physical infrastructure of many NSSs, with well-equipped and well-functioning libraries being one priority.

23. Co-operation and co-ordination among producers as well as between users and producers of statistics should be developed, where they do not exist, and strengthened, where they do exist, so that one could move away from the current state where users always complained about late and insufficient data and producers bemoaned the unrealistic demands by users. Finally, the lack of sufficient analysis of existing data remained one of the most serious deficiencies of NSSs and indicated where major challenges for the future (the theme of Chapter IV) would be.

24. Regarding the Major challenges in the 1990s, the Consultant made the point that latent demand existed for statistics of all types but that priorities were not always very apparent. He therefore suggested that, in the 1990s, NSSs should attach greater importance to defining their priority areas of work in accordance with the developmental goals and objectives in their respective country. The list presented in paragraph 191 of the consultant's report was to be regarded as only a guide. The Consultant stressed that one of the principal problems affecting the continuity and consistency of statistical work particularly in Anglophne countries, remained the frequent turnover of staff. It had to be expected that the problem of the brain drain would soon catch up also with Francophone countries which, up till now, had been less affected, because their private sector was relatively less well-developed. Solutions were not readily available, especially if, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank estimated, real earnings in Africa would double only over the next twenty-five years.

25. Human resources development went beyond mere training and included much needed administrative transparency, for example, regarding promotion. Training would, however, also become increasingly important as better data analysis and quality control would require greater and higher professional skills. It is essential for NSSs to address the twin issues of quality control and data analysis, especially as planning ministries become more technical and planners become more sophisticated in their demands. The small number of women in the statistical profession in Africa remained a serious problem and greater attention would need to be paid to this area of concern. Attention was drawn to the fact that only one country was represented by a woman. The meeting was

reminded of UNDP's unwritten rule that women should be adequately represented at such meetings.

26. There was a call for a Methods and Standards Unit/Section/Division to be established in NSSs that do not have it, so that discrepancies in concepts, definitions and classifications used by several sections of the same NSS could be removed. Finally, it would be desirable to see more countries establishing national statistical associations to complement regional activities carried out by AFSA.

27. In the subsequent discussion, several speakers congratulated the author for the excellent report which provided a much-needed stock-taking of statistics in Africa and which dealt with this complex topic in a comprehensive and clear manner.

28. The representative of UNESCO provided complementary information on UNESCO's activities in Africa in the fields of education statistics, especially in response to the deterioration experienced in this area over the past decade. Among statistical topics of the future, cultural statistics needed to be included. The information paper by UNESCO was not discussed, but it was decided that relevant portions of the paper would be summarized and inserted at the appropriate portions of the strategy document.

29. Participants found that the problems of the NSS in their respective countries were reflected in the report. The further study of ways to generate resources from local sources for ensuring the sustainability of statistical work was suggested, e.g. a statistical tax on imports as had, in the late seventies, been tried in one country or a fee for companies to receive a statistical registration number. The statistical tax was operated in another country but the proceeds from this tax had not been passed on to the NSS; instead they remained with the Ministry of Finance. Nevertheless, it was felt that a strong case should be made for financial and technical autonomy of NSS, including independent sources of funding.

30. It was regretted that the table on technical assistance did not include countries of North Africa and Djibouti. The wish was expressed that, while agreeing with much of the analysis of technical assistance, a more positive note should be struck as many country programmes would not have been carried out without external aid. The President of AFSA also suggested that mention should be made in the report of sub-regional and regional statistical associations, like the AFSA, that should play an important role in statistical development

31. It was suggested that the quality and timeliness in the release of data suffered from political interference and this should be mentioned as a negative factor. Participants wished also to see a discussion on how the backlog of data could be dealt with and which strategies for increasing the use of statistical information needed to be devised.

32. It was observed that timeliness in the release of information needed to be seen in relation to the subject areas covered. The frequency of collection and publication of data should be discussed against the background of the setting of time limits.

33. A warning was made against calling for the expansion of publication programmes beyond major publications as the costs would be substantial and could not be borne by the NSS. Instead, it would be preferable to store information in an easily-retrievable and machine-readable form.

34. It was proposed that greater attention be given to training in order to minimize the problems of mobility of statisticians from NSSs and that a table on the number of statisticians trained by the centres should be included in the strategy document. Donors should allocate more resources for training. Also appropriate salary scale for statisticians working within the NSSs should be considered.

35. In response to the call in the report for more analysis within the NSS, it was stated that it was fundamentally important to determine where the work of the statistician ended and the work of the planner began. Responsibilities needed to be clearly established. Concerning the supply vs demand question, it was noted that if donors were not asking for certain types of data, these probably would never be produced. Priorities of NSSs were, in general, fairly clear and should be tackled by the NSSs in an operationally effective manner.

36. Some participants wished to see the experiences of Francophone countries covered more comprehensively in the report. The view was supported that sources for financing statistical work should be further discussed.

37. It was emphasized that financial problems lay at the heart of the inability of NSS to meet demand by users. In one country, efforts had recently been made to strengthen the link between users and producers. Participants wished to see specific recommendations to be included in the strategy document on improving data quality.

38. It was underscored that the availability of resources determines sometimes the priorities of statistical work. Capacity-building in analysis, sustainability of statistical work, its

optimal use, as well as user/producer links needed to be further addressed.

39. It was felt that the Consultant's report needed to give more weight to the section on the strategy for the 1990s and its implementation. A suggestion was made that current work of NSSs should include the development and application of estimation and projection techniques to meet urgent data needs for short-term policy formulation. Economic statisticians could also make valuable contributions in units responsible for standards and methods. Regarding the organization of NSSs, it was indicated that centralization was not necessarily the ideal situation. While co-ordination of statistical activities was considered to be a very important issue which should be given due attention by the meeting.

40. Participants were urged to give special consideration to the section on technical assistance. The causes for the lack of transfer of skills and the lack of sustainability needed to be identified. The question should be answered as to why training components were insufficient, even though countries had participated in the formulation of projects. Regarding statistical production, participants should clarify why tremendous achievements had taken place in demographic statistics, but less progress had been made in other fields of statistics. An answer was also needed why in international consultative meeting, such as the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), African countries did not succeed in stressing their needs or why those needs were insufficiently acknowledged by the international system.

41. It was suggested that lessons from successful as well as unsuccessful experiences with technical assistance should be drawn. The Swedish approach, involving institutional co-operation, being comprehensive in nature with a mix of short-term and long-term advisors provided to the countries, could point to a record of good experiences.

42. The wish was expressed to see more emphasis given to issues affecting STPA centres, such as the retention of trainers, training of trainers, resources for the acquisition of equipment and for funding research, the lack of proper physical infrastructure and the low number of women students. On this latter point, it was noted that efforts had been made to recruit more women into the programmes, even by lowering entry requirements, but that their enrolment was actually declining. It was urgently required to study ways to tackle this problem.

43. Some problems which emerged as a result of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes for example the freeze on

recruitment of statisticians in the public services, were pointed out. In one country technical assistance had resulted in creating new categories among the professional staff of the national statistical office. Indeed, the established staff continued to receive their basic pay while those newly recruited on externally-funded projects received higher salaries as contractual experts. That had serious consequences on the management of statistical offices and needed to be addressed without delay.

44. The need to give wider coverage to training and the STPA programme was further emphasized. In the area of technical assistance, training and staffing of statistical offices needed to receive greater attention. A clear strategy should be devised based on what was learned from the past, especially by looking at the factors influencing capacity-building. A discussion on how statistical components of non-statistical programmes could be cast was also called for so as to truly benefit countries concerned.

45. The representative of the World Bank also wished to see the future role of statistical offices further discussed. Part I of the report needed to clarify further whether and how data currently produced by NSSs were being used. Regarding the SDA, he felt that the report did not sufficiently cover its capacity-building aspects and the role it played in feeding data into the policy dialogue. He urged that a clear picture should be given of what the various stages of data collection, organization and analysis entailed. Workshops for users and producers could, for example, determine the kind of message which the data would convey to policy-makers and thus contribute to resolve the supply vis-a-vis demand issue.

46. In response to the comments made by delegates and representatives, the Consultant warned against overstating the case of an imbalance of statistical production in favour of demographic information. Such information was badly needed, but if the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) were to withdraw its assistance because of a perceived overemphasis on Demographic Data, African countries would be thrown back to the late sixties. On training, he agreed that if the participants felt that greater emphasis was needed, this could be done for the final version of the report. Regarding incentive payments, he felt that no satisfactory solutions were available at the moment and that the topic required further discussion. He reiterated his position on the issue of supply vs demand-driven statistical production and stated that he regarded the criticism forwarded by donors as largely unjustified.

47. In response to the question of where the work of statisticians should stop he felt that different cases needed to be considered. National accounts statisticians had, for example, an inherent interest in more analysis. In general, it was very important to actively promote data application within the NSS as, otherwise, low priority might be accorded to NSS in the future. Recent Needs

Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development missions in the population field showed that there was a significant under-utilization of data. The NSS also needed to play an active role in promoting its own data. Symposia were one possibility, provided that ministries would be represented at a sufficiently high technical level and not by relatively junior professional staff.

48. He questioned whether the issue of decentralization was really central. Decentralization had taken place, at the level of field staff in some countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, but it had to be determined whether it constituted a key problem for other countries. However, if the meeting felt the issue was sufficiently important, it could be discussed further and included in the final report.

49. The consultant agreed that the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on statistical organization and work needed to be further debated. He questioned whether analytical workshops held under World Bank-sponsored programmes attracted professionals at the operational level, especially when the meetings were held outside the continent.

50. The Working Group proceeded to examine specific paragraphs of the Part I of the Report, dealing with a Review of African Statistical Development, 1960-1990. Attention was called to the importance of agriculture in African economies and therefore the prominence that should be given to agricultural statistics in the strategy document the Group was discussing. It was regretted that in spite of the importance of agricultural statistics, very little discussion is devoted to it in statistical meetings in the region. African national statistical services were invited to play a more active role in the development of such statistics. It was proposed, therefore, that some mention should be made of agricultural statistics under Subject Coverage (paragraphs 10-37)[1].

51. As regards timeliness and quality of data (paragraphs 45-51), it was noted that returns from enquiries are not received at the same time and the NSS has to wait for a sufficiently large sample to come in before some preliminary results could be published. To that extent, the response rate affects timeliness of results of the data collected. Some participants felt, therefore, that the issue of response rate as well as that of possible political hinderance and interference should be mentioned in paragraph 48 as being some of the factors affecting timeliness and quality of data.

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[1]Paragraphs refer to the Consultant's report on the Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s.

52. In examining agenda item 5.2, dealing with a review of technical and financial assistance in Africa (paragraphs 52-142), it was agreed that in those instances where it was felt that technical co-operation had not achieved the desired effects, some attempt should be made to highlight the causes for failure. The failure of some African countries to share their experiences and to provide their share of project costs were cited among the major difficulties in the successful implementation of technical assistance in Africa.

53. The meeting agreed to a reformulation of paragraphs 68 and 69 as proposed by the representatives of ODA and Statistics Sweden respectively.

54. The Working Group also reviewed some of the African and global initiatives in the field of data collection, such as the African Census Programme (ACP), World Fertility Survey (WFS), the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), the National Accounts Capability Programme (NACP), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), and the statistical component of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project.

55. In his intervention, the delegate of Ghana referred to the objectives of the World Fertility Surveys (WFS) which was cited in the Strategy document (paragraph 87). He then drew attention to the statement in paragraph 90, that in Ghana, objective (b) was interpreted to mean the setting up of a scientifically designed machinery for the conduct of surveys of human fertility (levels and behaviour) and through this increase the nation's capability for fertility and other demographic research. He described as incorrect the assertion that the results of this capacity building objective are not obvious in Ghana or in any other African countries covered by the WFS. The fact that the country has been able to carry out successfully similar surveys like the DHS and Ghana Living Standard Survey for two years, using local manpower entirely on its own was ample demonstration that capacity had been put in place.

56. The delegate of Ghana, called on the meeting to delete the sentence of paragraph 114, stating that the main criticism of the LSMS was that it was a programme forced on African countries that were not quite sure what they were getting out of it except for some incentive payments to selected staff, because the statement had no basis of fact. He indicated that his government, in deciding to undertake the LSMS, knew that it would assist in generating the needed data for its Economic Recovery Programme. He regretted that Ghana was not contacted for its response to the criticism. The delegate of Mauritania also mentioned that his country accepted to participate in the LSMS because the survey

generated the requisite data, particularly in household income and expenditure.

57. In responding to the other part of paragraph 114 as well as the lower half of paragraph 124, the delegate of Ghana told the meeting that he did not see anything wrong with an external agency drawing up a detailed questionnaire for the use in Africa, provided it was flexible enough to accommodate equally detailed amendments, observations etc. The delegate of Mauritania again informed the meeting that the LSMS questionnaire was modified to include modules that were relevant to the country. He recognized that the LSMS could not meet all data needs of Mauritania, but the survey nevertheless had been useful to the country.

58. Touching on the assessment of the programme on the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (paragraphs 117-127), the representative of the World Bank pointed out that it was not the Bank alone but the UNDP, ADB and the World Bank that did not accept the criticisms of the interim evaluation of SDA. He stated that the rejection of the criticism was contained in Volume II of the evaluation report. He further stated that the important point which needs to be highlighted is that, through the SDA, much needed funds to the tune of US$57.8 million have been earmarked for statistical development in Africa. A request was made by the meeting for the World Bank representative to provide a breakdown of the US$ 57.8 million by recipient countries and donor sources. However, the representative of the World Bank could only provide information by group of countries with a statement that funding of these activities was coming in the form of grants from a variety of bilateral and multilateral donors as well as IDA loans.

59. Some participants expressed their country's appreciation of SDA, but noted that there have been problems with its implementation and that although it was intended as a buffer to the effects of IMF/World Bank supported programmes of structural adjustment, the very positive results have yet to come. One delegate informed the meeting that while structural adjustment has caused manpower reduction in some sectors of the public service in his country, it had resulted in increase in such resources in the national statistical service as the need for more and better data to support development initiatives is being realized.

60. On the issue of capacity building, the meeting recognized the need for some caution. While some participants had asserted that the requisite capacity had been put in place, outside experts continued to be brought to help other countries. The need to aim at less reliance on such outside experts, particularly long-term ones, was emphasized without prejudice with the assistance that may be called for owing to changing technology.

61. In reference to paragraph 121, it was noted that the Steering Committee of SDA Project had, at its last meeting in May 1991, endorsed a consensus proposal submitted by the donors on that committee that "IBRD should reduce the level of sophistication of survey modules, analysis plans and methodologies to suit country needs and fit the absorptive and implementation capacities of individual countries".

62. With regard to the status of the Evaluation Report on SDA it was pointed out that the Report had been reviewed at the recent session of UNDP Governing Council. The Council in its decision IV, had urged "the Administrator to implement the recommendation of the Evaluation Report."

63. The representative of the UNDP mentioned that each of the sponsoring agencies made its comments on the evaluation report and it seems the consultant used the facts which he wanted. The meeting agreed to his suggestion to include one additional sentence after paragraph 127.

64. The point was made that one reason for the view that technical co-operation has not achieved its primary objective of developing national skills and transferring knowledge has been the brain drain. This, it was noted, was not in itself bad. As a matter of fact, it could be seen as part of structural adjustment and it should not in any way be construed as a failure on the part of technical co-operation to achieve its primary aim of capacity building.

65. It was noted however that the issue of capacity building was a difficult one in that it was not possible to identity the precise elements of capacity attributable to particular technical co-operation programmes. For example, countries like Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Zambia and Zimbabwe which had participated in AHSCP had in fact enhanced their capabilities but it was not realistic/feasible to isolate the contribution of AHSCP or for that matter any specific project in capability building. Another reason cited for the apparent failure of technical co-operation was that activities under such co-operation were, in many instances, not properly integrated with on-going and planned statistical activities in the system.

66. The attention of the Working Group was called to the need to think of technical co-operation not only in terms of utilization of expertise from outside the region but also in terms of those from within. In this connection, it was suggested that registers of regional experts be maintained. One delegate informed the meeting that his country had found out that short-term experts, although expensive in some cases, are much more effective than long-term ones. However, it was pointed out that the decision of whether to take in short- or long-term experts would have to take account of

the state of statistical development of the particular country. The fact that a country continues to call in experts is not necessarily an indication of the failure of technical co-operation to develop national capacity; it could be because of new areas of activities and changing circumstances.

67. The representative of the UK ODA informed the meeting that the opening statement in paragraph 135 which implies that donors are more interested in immediate results than in training was not true of the United Kingdom and Sweden.

68. On the issue of proper co-ordination of donor activities, it was observed that there were some apparent weaknesses in the capacity at the national level of some African countries to effectively co-ordinate such technical co-operation programmes and projects. The need for donors to be cognizant of this fact was stressed.

69. During the discussion of agenda item 5.3 on the State of African Statistics in 1990 (paragraphs 143-177), the delegate of Nigeria informed the meeting that the status of the Federal Office of Statistics as described in paragraph 144 is as it was before 1988. He said that in that year, the Civil Service was restructured, with the Federal Office of Statistics logically achieving the status of an extra-ministerial department. Every ministry or extra ministerial department is expected to have a maximum of three (3) service and five (5) operational departments. As a result of this new dispensation, the statistical unit in each ministry or ministerial department is administratively independent of FOS. He also indicated that the Head of the Federal Office of Statistics has always earned the same salary as that of a Permanent Secretary of a ministry, now Director-general (ref paragraph 145). Touching on paragraph 147, he indicated that a new division, called Field Operation, had been established to deal with methods and evaluation, while another division has been created for data processing, management and dissemination. This has resulted in increased use of micro-computers as against mini and main frame computers.

70. In his contribution to the debate on mechanisms for co-ordination among producers and users (paragraphs 151-153), the delegate of Nigeria said that it was not correct to say that four divergent estimates of agricultural production were given by four institutions in Nigeria. Of the four, only the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have published data series for all users, while the other two are World Bank-assisted projects which have unpublished evaluation data. CBN data series are adjustments of FOS survey data to take account

of non-coverage in FOS surveys. Hence CBN data is a fine example of the proper use of FOS surveys data.

71. The participants underscored the vital importance of co-ordination of statistical activities in the African region. The point was made that lack of proper co-ordination leads to duplication of activities and wastage of scarce resources. One delegate requested examples of co-ordination mechanisms which have been found to work well in countries.

72. During the discussion on subject coverage (paragraphs 154-157), the delegate of Central African Republic informed the meeting that his country has carried out an informal sector survey and requested that this fact be noted in the strategy document in addition to other countries which had been mentioned in this regard. The Working Group recognized that some countries had conducted surveys of small scale agriculture, but noted that the definition of the informal sector did not include farming activities.

73. The representative of the ILO noted that the informal sector survey carried out in the United Republic of Tanzania was in Zanzibar and not the mainland. That for mainland Tanzania the survey would be conducted in 1991/1992 (ref paragraph 157). He also informed the meeting of his Organization's intention to organize a meeting of experts to examine issues concerning the informal sector. That meeting would be held in early 1992 and its report presented to the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1993 whose agenda includes a discussion concerning the informal sector statistics.

74. In their contribution to the discussion on data production (paragraph 158-161), some participants emphasized the importance of a proper conception of data production. Data production should be seen to include data collection, data cleaning, processing, analysis and storage, software, data base development and maintenance, and data dissemination. It was also suggested that the section should be expanded to include discussion on the data analysis for policy component of the SDA as well as on marketing and role of media in promotion statistics.

75. With regard to data processing it was requested that the ARIEL and IMPS software programmes be added to those listed in paragraph 159. It was observed that due to the rapid increase in software packages it was essential for African countries to have a proper understanding of such devices in order to avoid problems when using them. Several participants were of the view that data back-log in the Africa region was of such concern that it needed to be addressed in the strategy. It was also noted that although interest is usually on current data, it was important, to clear data backlog in order for the statistical service to be able to

provide useful time series. A remark was made that if countries had been able to process all the data they had collected the data image attributable to Africa could have been positive.

76. The need for African countries to collect and disseminate accurate and comprehensive financial statistics was stressed, given the importance of such statistics for economic management. Further, it was observed that the present state of such statistics for a number of African countries is unsatisfactory.

77. During the discussion of agenda item 5.4 on the major challenges in the 1990s (paragraphs 178-242), it was pointed out that one of the problems of African Statistical development is that the focus of attention over the years has been on strengthening the supply side and that not sufficient attention has been given to strengthening the demand side, such as efforts to educate users on how statistics could be utilized. It was, however, observed that the problems of lack of timeliness in delivery of data had given an erroneous impression that data collection had been supply-driven.

78. It was suggested that social statistics be given more importance in the core list of subjects to be covered as these statistics are of relevance to human development, a subject which is being stressed in the 1990s.

79. Some participants highlighted the need for instilling in the people a statistical culture, through the introduction of the teaching of statistics in high schools, if not in primary schools. There was consensus that the issue be addressed as a strategy.

80. The representative of the UK ODA called attention to several training programmes in the UK for professional staff of developing countries and suggested that such information be included in paragraph 203.

81. The representative of UNESCO recalled that the coming decade has been declared the decade of Education for All and also the decade for Human Development. He therefore invited the Group to take into account these major development thrusts when reflecting on strategies to be adopted to achieve the objectives of the decade ahead.

82. There was a lively discussion on data applications and analysis (paragraphs 216-219). Some participants were of the view that the statistician should produce data as well as do some descriptive analysis of such data. Others felt that interpretation and analysis of data are best done by users. It was agreed that some analysis should also be undertaken by the statistician. How

much analysis should the statistician do would have to depend on the resources available.

83. During the discussion on statistical data bases (paragraphs 224-228), the representative of FAO informed the participants that his Organization, through its "AGROSTAT" data bases management system, has developed an agricultural data base for all countries and that this data base will be further refined to make on-line information more readily available.

84. On the issue of priority of statistical activity (229-230), he stated that the FAO Regional Office for Africa is in the process of developing a manual on how to monitor and evaluate structural adjustment programmes. The indicators have been developed and are currently being field-tested in the United Republic of Tanzania. Further, the FAO is developing a statistical data base on women and their contribution to the agriculture sector which will be further refined as more relevant information becomes available. Regarding recruitment of experts, he informed the meeting that FAO, since 1990, has intensified its efforts to recruit experts from the African region to work on projects and that this trend is likely to continue in the 1990s. Some reservation on FAO's capacity to evaluate structural adjustment programmes was, however, expressed during discussion.

85. The Consultant replied to a number of issues raised by participants. As regards the LSMS, he mentioned that the criticism (that the content of the questionnaire had been determined outside Africa and that, in the case of one country, proposed modifications could not be incorporated because the computer programme had been finalized) had been made elsewhere and was contained in a number of reports. He also drew attention to the fact that with respect to paragraph 124 of the document, Chad and Senegal had both stated at a recent meeting held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire that they had to make alterations to the SDA Priority Survey.

86. With regard to the issue of capacity building the consultant maintained that not enough of this had been put in place in the region by technical co-operation activities since the necessity to bring in experts from outside the region to work in the countries has continued.

F. STRATEGY FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT

(Agenda Item 6)

87. In presenting Part II of the report, the Consultant informed the Working Group that he had found it necessary, as a starting point in the attempt to evolve a strategy for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s, to examine some recent

initiatives which have attempted to address the apparent lack of appreciation of the role of statistics in development by utilizing statistical information in programmes for the recovery, development and transformation of African economies. These initiatives were the African Capacity Building Initiative (ACBI), for a Renewal of Development Planning in Africa, (UNDP Project RAF/89/054) and the National Long Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS).

88. The Consultant noted that the data requirements for these and other initiatives were enormous, be it for preparing long-term perspectives, monitoring, or evaluation. These data have to come from the national statistical system. To be responsive to such data requirements, the system would have to be properly co-ordinated and integrated, and the capacity of the national statistical office itself will need to be enhanced.

89. The Consultant observed that discussions on strengthening statistical systems have taken place under the auspices of the United Nations and at a meeting organized jointly by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) and the World Bank. Among the points stressed at these discussion meetings as areas for necessary action in the future were:" the need to promote effective demand for statistics; the need for 5-year development plans for statistics; the need for donors to develop a framework for technical assistance; the need for training for management personnel; and the need to evaluate past activities to draw lessons for the future". In addition, the Consultant recommended other areas that could be improved as well. These include the necessity to control and motivate staff and the importance to cultivate the ability to anticipate problems and make room for such in project planning and implementation.

90 The Consultant noted that these recommendations were not new, but that they had remained proposals or resolutions, because no effective strategy had been prepared for their implementation. He deemed it necessary, therefore, for the Working Group to go beyond discussing and adopting a strategy for statistical development and propose practical ways of implementing the strategy. Before indicating the steps to be taken to resolve the problems of African statistical development, he emphasized the necessity of each individual country working out specific strategies to suit its local conditions. However, the consultant pointed out that there were certain general areas of concern which all countries would need to take into account in developing a strategy. These were discussed at national, sub-regional/regional and global levels.

91. At the national level, the Consultant listed five areas of action: needs assessment; preparation of medium-term statistical development plans; data processing and analysis; data storage,

retrieval and dissemination; and new directions for technical co-operation. Regarding needs assessment, the Consultant pointed to the need for a mission or team to evaluate the needs of NSSs, the data requirements of users and the problems producers face. For this to be successful, it was suggested that the team should be made up of respectable individuals who could be taken into confidence. The head of the team needed to be someone who would have easy access to the minister responsible for statistics. The point was made that the team could be entirely local or a mix of local and external, depending on the level of competence of local expertise; in all cases, the country reserves the right to decide who to invite to constitute the team.

92. The meeting was informed that the report of the needs assessment team would have to be submitted to government. After acceptance of the report, with or without amendment, the NSS was required to proceed to prepare a medium-term statistical development plan. Then, an annual or biennial work programme budget, following certain basic steps (as outlined in paragraph 262), would be developed for approval to enable implementation of the work programme to begin.

93. On technical co-operation, the consultant recalled that the UNDP's policy in this area put more premium on the use of local personnel as experts. Given the Senegal experience with professional statistician in the NSO vis-a-vis personnel on externally-funded projects, however, one would have to tread cautiously. Finally, the Consultant raised the issue of the need for co-ordination if technical co-operation is to be helpful. In this regard, he outlined four levels of co-ordination of statistical activities with the NSS in order to harmonize definitions, concepts and classifications: co-ordination among producers and between producers and users of statistics; co-ordination between producers and donors and co-ordination among donors.

94. Regarding strategy for statistical development at the sub-regional level, the Consultant mentioned the need to develop concepts, definitions and classifications to suit African conditions, the need to develop statistical training and research and the need for advisory services in data production and in the establishment of data bases or an information sharing system for the region. He also highlighted the need for preparing guidelines on statistical development plans as well as handbooks and manuals dealing with specific African situations. Finally, the Consultant called attention to the need for co-ordination among donors and institutions in the region in providing technical assistance to countries in the areas of needs assessment missions, preparation of medium-term plan and preparation of work programme budgets. He called for further suggestions to improve upon the section.

95. Touching on the strategy at the global level, the Consultant called attention to the need for co-operation in working out umbrella programmes, in developing global standards handbooks and manuals and in providing interregional advisory services.

96. In discussing issues of general nature, the Working Group noted with concern the absence of a strategy in the report for increasing the participation of women in statistical development. It was agreed that it was one area that the Group would have to devote time and thought so that concrete proposal would be made for inclusion in the final report. Also noted as deserving mention was the role of the mass media in building up the image of NSSs to create awareness for the importance of statistics in development and nation building.

97. It was observed that there was no unique approach to developing a strategy for statistical development. It was suggested that issues raised in the review of African statistical development during the past three decades should form the basis for formulating the strategy. While the strategy offered some hope for statistical development, a number of participants emphasized the need for regional and sub-regional organizations to give support to national statistical offices in selling the recommendations of the strategy to governments.

98. It was pointed out that the strategy for statistical development should embrace all statistical activities at national level. In this regard reference to national statistical systems instead of national statistical services was welcome. The statistical interests and concerns of sectoral ministries should be taken into account. It was stressed that the strategy should accommodate all actors in the statistical field.

99. The Working Group was, however, reminded that the regional focus in statistical development should not be diluted. The example of ECA, which has 30 years of experience in the statistical field in Africa but which is often neglected when new initiatives are proposed, was given. Thus, while it was desirable to have new institutions involved in statistical activity in Africa, the regional institutions should be strengthened rather than marginalised.

100. A concern was expressed on the multiplicity of initiatives in the economic recovery of African countries. It was suggested that one initiative would be enough, otherwise the multiplicity would detract from the statistician's work. However, the Consultant clarified the issue by stating that there was no duplication as the initiatives referred to in the report were economic initiatives which had implications for statistical development.

101. With reference to paragraph 247, the attention of the Working Group was called to the current trend in development planning to move from 5-year development plans to 10-or 15-year plans. It was argued that statistical plans should be reconciled with economic plans and therefore a shift to a 10-15-year statistical development plan was suggested. However, some participants contended that with the liberalization process in African economies, the long-term centralized plan may not be the most appropriate to respond to dynamic data requirements in African countries. They wondered if the 5-year duration of the plan should not even be shortened to 2 or 3 years. A number of participants, however, advocated for a combination of long term perspective plans with one year or two years rolling plans and work programmes.

102. The FAO representative observed that agricultural statistics was not given much prominence in the past, despite the dominance of agriculture in African economies. He regretted that the proposed strategy had fallen into the same unfortunate situation by being silent on agriculture. He suggested that the special role of agricultural statistics should be recognized in the context of the strategy for development.

103. The following items were proposed to be added to the list of other areas requiring improvement (paragraph 247):

i. the necessity to enhance data analysis; and
ii. the need to solve data processing constraints and backlog.

104. The delegate of Cape Verde observed that the document covers more of English-speaking and French-speaking countries. It was proposed that in future, Portuguese-speaking countries should also be considered as the strategy was for all countries. He then stressed that in implementing the strategy, his country would require the support of ECA, UNDP and other agencies. He particularly pointed to the need for methodological studies on the Islands. The Working Group noted the sentiments expressed and acknowledged that the peculiar experiences of the Island countries would have to be examined and addressed. There was a call for studies into how the needs of such countries could be taken care of.

105. In discussing agenda item 6.1 on the strategy for statistical development at the national level (paragraphs 249-286), the Working Group devoted much attention to needs assessment missions, the composition of needs assessment teams and the new directions in technical co-operation.

106. It was pointed out that all Maghreb countries have already started evaluating their statistical needs in line with the proposal for needs assessments in the strategy. It was suggested

that the use of regional teams made it possible to share experience with experts from other countries and also to harmonize or standardize assessment of needs within the subregion.

107. While there was general consensus for needs assessment in national statistical services, there were different perceptions of what the concept of needs assessment was. For instance, the Nigerian delegate was of the opinion that countries knew what their statistical needs were, and that what was required was only to assess need for technical assistance. In reaction to the above contribution, it was noted that 'needs' could be defined to include concerns of users, usefulness of statistics produced, types of data not used, as well as requirements of producers. Some delegates also indicated that African countries were at different levels of statistical development such that some may still need to mount needs assessment exercises.

108. The Consultant clarified the usage of the terms, needs assessment and programme review and strategy development (PRSD). UNFPA uses needs assessment for the initial phase of the exercise while PRSD is used at the stage of evaluating or following up to update needs. The participants agreed to the use of the expression "Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development".

109. The delegate of Mauritania indicated that while needs assessment was necessary, without a sure source of funds, the exercise may not contribute much to statistical development. He informed the Working Group that Mauritania had initiated a system similar to needs assessment in which a diagnostic study of the whole statistical system was done. A 5-year statistical plan is in place and ministerial co-ordination committees have been formed. However, he indicated that lack of adequate resources is a handicap to statistical development. In this case donor support would be necessary.

110. Other participants called for flexibility in the terms of reference of the needs assessment teams. This was particularly necessary in view of the democratization process taking place in many African countries. The needs assessment teams should anticipate the immediate needs which would come with the democratization process. The delegate of Senegal informed the Working Group about the organization, in his country, of Statistical National Days involving users and producers of statistics. Subsequently, a Statistical Committee, which was being set up, would hold its first meeting on the 18th November 1991, the African Statistics Day.

111. The representative of Overseas Development Administration (ODA) shared his Organizations's experience in needs assessment.

He informed the workshop that ODA has been asked by countries to conduct needs assessment. However, the exercise is mostly in specialized areas like economic statistics. The only exception was in Namibia, where ODA conducted a comprehensive statistical needs assessment. In all cases, the assessments have been found very useful. The ODA representative stated that the needs assessment should not be a one shot activity. He suggested that there should be an updating mechanism through periodic reviews and evaluations.

112. The Working Group was informed that FAO has instituted a cost effective method of assessing statistical needs. The FAO representative indicated that producer and user workshops help to identify statistical needs. Results show that in most cases, countries know their needs while the problem commonly highlighted was lack of co-ordination.

113. It was felt that normally after the government has formulated a development plan, the statistical office should examine the statistical implications and thus anticipate needs and demands. Thus needs assessment/PRSD should be on a continual basis. The view was expressed that the overall assessment of statistics needs was complex compared to the sectoral approach adopted by agencies like UNFPA. It was, therefore, proposed that guidelines should be prepared indicating assistance to be provided to countries in needs assessment. It was further suggested that needs assessment should also be done for regional organizations. It was noted, for instance, that possibly because of underfunding, ECA may not have been able to be more effective in some areas. There was need, therefore, to examine the capacity of such regional organizations in order to make them effective.

114. It was pointed out that needs assessment should cover all producers of statistics in the country, including the Central Bank and sector ministries to promote co-ordination in order to avoid duplication. It was further stated that the assessment should indicate who should produce what type of statistics.

115. On the composition of needs assessment teams, there were different opinions as to the personalities, levels of expertise and affiliations of members of the team. Some participants indicated that the team should comprise national experts. Other participants suggested that the experts could be local or from outside the country, but that teams should be composed of experts in various disciplines rather than looking for personalities who may know very little about the task assigned to them. The need to include in the team people at levels of policy initiation, researchers and statisticians was emphasized. It was also proposed that national experts should be encouraged, as much as possible, to be members of the teams, while the regional advisory team should work with national teams in needs assessment.

116. It was observed that there was no one model for the composition of the team. It seemed advisable to combine national and international experts in the needs assessment teams. The Working Group acknowledged that situations differ from country to country and that individual countries would have to come out with a team appropriate for their individual needs.

117. The Consultant in reacting to some of the interventions by participants agreed that periodic reviews would be beneficial. On the question of using workshops as a means of conducting needs assessment, he expressed doubt about their effectiveness. He was of the opinion that workshops could not be the sole means of ascertaining needs, for experience showed that workshops do not effectively articulate statistical needs.

118. In discussing the issues of preparation of medium-term statistical plans and development of annual or biennial work programmes budgets (paragraphs 257-262), a number of participants underscored the problems of drawing plans when resources were difficult to get. In this regard, one delegate saw little need in preparing a budget when countries were not sure of funds. Some participants reiterated the call for a statistical import tax and statistical numbers tax on business establishment in order to generate funds to support statistical plans and programmes. It was further proposed that in addition to what countries allocated to statistical work, donors should be called upon to support statistical programmes.

119. The Consultant reminded the Working Group that external assistance was usually included in the budget only when there was commitment. He also felt that the meeting should not recommend statistical tax as this was an issue which could be explored at the country level. To allow for such country initiatives, he proposed to add "Other Sources" to the list in item d of paragraph 262.

120. The Consultant also stressed the need to deal with issues of data production, from data processing through storage to dissemination. On data storage, retrieval and dissemination, he cautioned that, with time, the rapid changes in computer technology may change the concerns expressed in paragraphs 271-276. He stressed the need for putting in place a system of basic documentation that was user-friendly. In the discussions which followed a participant suggested that a specific paragraph on the computer security and data protection should be inserted under an appropriate section in the strategy document under discussion. UNECA was called upon to try and harmonize various data systems and ensure that they can work in the region. The participants urged that the development of statistical data bases should follow thorough studies on their contents and future use.

121. The representative of ISAE indicated that his Institute was assisting with the analysis of data from surveys and censuses. He appealed to countries in the East and Southern African sub-region to take advantage of the services the Institute offers. ISAE would do some in-depth analysis of survey data in these countries; however, funding by donors would be necessary where countries could not afford.

122. The need to identify the requirements of users of data was emphasized. In most cases, simple tabular sheets, if available, would be what users need, so that budgeting for expensive and sophisticated facilities which very few users would require could be avoided.

123. The Working Group was reminded that documentation was not only lacking in most data produced in African countries but documentation on data based on computerized media was also a serious problem. This, in turn, had a bearing on the use of data in the region. The difficulties statistical offices face in the allocation of resources should call for prudence in the types of storage facilities countries adopt. The in-depth analysis of data necessitates the setting up of mechanisms which will enable the circulation of information and skills among NSSs and training and socio-economic research institutions as well as the introduction of multi-disciplinarity within the NSS staff. The NSSs should encourage the accumulation and capitalization of knowledge which will generate progress by organizing systematically the writing up and storage of methodological notes.

124. It was suggested that countries should be assisted in the area of data storage, retrieval and dissemination. It was further pointed out that data processing activities should feature in national statistical plans. In emphasizing the need for compiling data bases, the example of the World Bank which has a special section for compiling data bases and for collecting statistical information for users was cited. African countries could set up such units, with the assistance in capability and institution building required for implementation of a strategy on data storage.

125. Explaining the thought behind the caution for discriminating use of models and methodology of research of doubtful utility to understanding of African situation, the Consultant stated that models based on assumptions from developed countries have been applied indiscriminately in Africa often with disastrous consequences.

126. The representative of INSEE gave an account of French assistance to African countries and of future plans. He stressed that the relative small size in terms of the population of most Francophone countries did not allow the establishment of a statistical apparatus with a critical mass to be truly operational.

Economic integration which these countries aspired to and the process of democratization which was underway in several African countries called, however, for the production of adequate, comparable and credible statistics. Economic and social data should be available to all economic agents and to all citizens. This analysis had given birth to the idea to create a centre of excellence to propose methodologies on basic statistics; to harmonize concepts and nomenclatures; to carry out analytical work; to organize on-going training in the countries of the region; to maintain accessible data banks; and finally initiate projects for funding by donors.

127. The organization should be modelled on the pattern of EUROSTAT at the African level, applying the subsidiarity principle. Countries will remain in charge of the production of their national data. The franc zone could certainly be considered the best geographical area for establishing a federal centre of statistics to be called, tentatively, ***Observatoire économique or institut de la statistique et des études économiques de la Zone Franc***. It is to be closely affiliated with credible institutions capable to mobilize resources, i.e. the Central Banks of West and Central Africa, but nevertheless remain autonomous. Its Administrative Council should be composed of Governors of Central Banks, Director-Generals of statistical offices of member States, the Director-General of INSEE and representatives of the French Minister of Co-operation and Development and the Director of the Treasury. The Scientific Council should comprise of qualified personalities and representatives of users and could also include representatives of ECA, ADB, EUROSTAT, and the World Bank.

128. INSEE would propose to the French Government in the near future to invite ministers of finance for designating experts to a working group meeting to be held before the next session of the Council of Ministers (October 1991). The results would go before the next Council session in the spring of 1992 and the project could thus be implemented in the course of the second semester 1992. The issue of the financing of this agency is opened, bearing in mind that France will not be in a position to support the entire cost and that direct contributions of Franc Zone member States is envisaged. The accommodation of French-speaking countries which don't belong to the Franc Zone and Lusophone countries could be discussed later.

129. During discussion on new directions for technical co-operation (paragraphs 277-286), the delegate of Mozambique informed the meeting that efforts were being made in her country, through technical co-operation resources, to create durable statistical infrastructure with the aim of strengthening the institutional framework, standardizing and improving statistical information and

developing human resources. On co-ordination she informed the meeting that there was a technical advisory committee composed of representatives of sector ministry statistical offices as well as departmental heads and the Director of the National Directorate of Statistics (NDS). The NDS plays the leadership role.

130. It was suggested that the sub heading of "New directions for technical co-operation" in the report should be changed to "New directions for better co-ordination of technical co-operation" as the text weighed more towards co-ordination.

131. On the issue of co-ordination between producers and users of statistics within countries, it was indicated that there was need to register all surveys conducted in a country with a central body. This was necessary to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. Reacting to a suggestion in the paragraph 286 that perhaps the UNDP representative should chair the donors meeting, some participants indicated that such an arrangement could create problems, especially with bilateral donors.

132. The participants shared the sentiments in the Consultant's report under new directions for technical co-operation. It was, however, indicated that there may be problems in implementing the suggested ideas. It was noted that in some countries there is a Producer-User Committee, but meetings of the Committee are more often than not attended by middle level staff who would not have the full mandate of the sector they represent to make policy statements. To be effective there is need to solicit the attendance of senior level staff to such committee meetings. On coordination of activities within NSSs, it was suggested identifying alternative media, like newsletters, to supplement regular meetings, to share ideas and know what is happening in other sections, because pressing demands on management make it difficult to schedule regular meetings.

133. On co-ordination of statistical activities within national statistical systems, the need and importance of regular meetings and regular exchange of information within the system were emphasized. It was pointed out that it was imperative to indicate who should initiate co-ordination. This would help the realization of the goals of the strategy and instil dynamism in the whole process.

134. It was pointed out that technical co-operation was very important and that there was need to include the role of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) in the proposed strategy. The participants were informed that donors usually have regular meetings on general development assistance issues, within which statistical assistance could also be discussed. However, reference was made to the apparent lack of co-ordination among international organizations with respect to data collection, this

is evident from the multiplicity of questionnaires countries receive seemingly on similar subjects.

135. It was stressed that beneficiary countries should play an important role in the co-ordination due to the necessity for the countries to master their development programmes and also since the latter have all the information concerning the on-going projects. In the specific case of EEC co-operation, the meeting was informed that countries have the latitude to propose co-operation projects under the Lome convention. It was also pointed out that EUROSTAT assists in the identification and preparation of projects. An example of EUROSTAT contribution in this field is the recent EUROSTAT mission in Côte d'Ivoire, together with the World Bank and the French co-operation, to review the re-organization of the statistical services of the country. In its co-ordination efforts, EUROSTAT is discussing with the ACP Secretariat an initiative which will establish the fundamental basis for its statistical co-operation policy with the ACP countries. As an example of EUROSTAT interest in Portuguese-speaking countries , it was indicated that EUROSTAT actively participated in the creation of CESD-Lisbon which supports Portuguese-speaking African countries in the field of statistical training.

136. The ISAE representative shared Uganda's experience in the utilization of local experts with the Working Group. The ISAE collaborated with UNFPA, the World Bank , the Rockefeller Foundation and UNDP in the use of local experts. However, he pointed out that some donor agencies were still opposed to the use of local experts. The representative hoped that there will be a change of policy by such organizations. He further informed the meeting that discussions were going on in Uganda concerning the execution of some projects by local institutions to be included in UNDP's fifth programming cycle.

137. In reacting to the interventions of the delegates, the Consultant indicated that the title in sub item 11 of this report does not deal with only co-ordination; it deals with technical co-operation, but there is reference to co-ordination of national level institutions because of its implications for technical cooperation. It was emphasized that co-ordination within NSS and among producers of statistics was essential as lack of it would be frustrating to donors. He also stated that there was need for donors, producers, and users to meet periodically to avoid duplication.

138. Discussion of agenda item 6.2 on strategy of statistical development at the sub-regional and regional level (paragraphs 187-307) centred around coordination and cooperation in the development of concepts, definitions, classifications, handbooks and manuals

more suited to the African region and in the provision of advisory services.

139. Commenting on the need for regional organizations like UNECA, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), the East and Southern Africa Preferential Trade Area (PTA), etc to play a leading role in adapting global concepts, it was suggested that countries should further be stratified into homogeneous groups in adopting concepts. It was stressed that African countries should adapt concepts and classifications as well as designs adopted at global level.

140. The participants suggested that the whole section on training and research (chapter 13) should be expanded to include training institutes and the development of statistical tools for training. In this regard, the representative of the EASTC indicated that STPA centres located in different countries were indeed regional institutes requiring regional assistance. He claimed that host countries were left to fend for themselves. While appreciating the assistance ECA provided to STPA centres, he however prefixed it that the funds were too little. He hoped EEC would also support Anglophone statistical training centres as it did to Francophone centres. He then appealed to ADB, the World Bank, UN specialized agencies to support STPA centres.

141. In reply to the comment by the representative of EASTC, the representative of EUROSTAT indicated that ACP countries benefitting from EEC co-operation under the Lome Convention are English-, French-, Portuguese and Spanish-speaking countries and that no linguistic discrimination exists in the approval of co-operation projects. He also pointed out that EUROSTAT is assisting EASTC in the preparation of a project document for that training centre.

142. A dynamic user approach in statistical training and research was advocated. Also the needs of Portuguese-speaking countries and the private sector should be addressed. The ADB and other reinforcing institutions were proposed for discussion in this chapter. Attention was called to the fact that no reference to economic statistics is made under training and research. It was also suggested that request should be made to donor agencies to fund methodological surveys. In the proposed expanded section on statistical training, it was suggested that among associate centres, the Indian Research Institute which trains African statisticians in agricultural methods and techniques should be included.

143 The meeting urged donors to consider providing block grants, physical equipment, fellowships for Masters and Ph.D. programmes, and long-term teaching experts. On the strategy to promote women in statistics, it was suggested that ECA should be given more funds to increase the number of fellowships for women who intend to study

statistics. Training of statistics at primary and secondary schools should be promoted and encouraged.

144. The representative of Ibadan University indicated that the Statistics Department at the University of Ibadan benefitted very little from being a member of STPA in the last five years. She suggested that STPA centres should be assessed from time to time with regard to resources as situations change. She further suggested that there should be at least some resources the training centres should receive annually as STPA centres. This will ensure maintaining minimum standards. On women in statistics, she echoed the view that women should be encouraged to read statistics. She further proposed that qualified female statisticians should be encouraged to attend professional meetings and the Advisory Service should have at least 25 percent of qualified and experienced women and two advisers on women affairs (female).

145. Regarding the proposed list of areas needing advisory services in paragraph 294, it was pointed out that analysis which was an important area requiring attention, was not included. It was also stressed that economic statistics had not been adequately catered for. Therefore, the inclusion of two advisers for economic statistics, two for national accounts and another two for analysis and current statistics was proposed. Similarly, advisory services in the areas of administrative records statistics and social statistics were suggested for consideration. A proposal was made that the composition of the advisory team should be revised to reflect total needed capability in advisory services at the regional level as it was important to adopt an umbrella programme for statistical development. It was further suggested that advisory services should focus more on countries at a lower level of statistical development.

146. With regard to information systems the FAO representative proposed that ECA should liaise with other data bases that exist in the African region.

147. It was observed that the document was silent on the capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations carrying out statistical work. It was suggested that organizations like, ECA, ECOWAS, ADB and PTA should be examined. In this connection it was advised that a wrong impression should not be created that the issue of strategy is that of ECA alone. It was also pointed out that the document under consideration was completely silent on STPA associate statistical training centres.

148. A suggestion was made for a regional or global clearing house for National Statistical Services to represent their interest and concerns in dealing with software producers and suppliers. Such

a unit could help NSSs in the selection and acquisition of appropriate software packages by undertaking regular reviews of the various packages available and by helping to negotiate favourable terms and follow-up support for the statistical offices. Such a unit could be established at the regional level but might more appropriately be located at the UN Statistical Office. The representative of the UN Statistical Office indicated that there already exists a unit at the United Nations, which is funded by UNFPA, which works on the development of software for demographic analysis. This unit could possibly have its terms of reference expanded to undertake the function described above.

149. With regard to handbooks and manuals, it was suggested that reference should be made to all possible sources of such manual and not only the United Nations. It was then emphasized that the proposed strategy should involve all actors in the statistical field not only selected agencies.

150. The Consultant, in reacting to some of the interventions on the strategy, indicated that he was not sure of what the specific needs of the specialized agencies were, for example on advisory services. On the role of women in statistics he indicated that ECA had tried to reserve 30 percent of the fellowships for women, but owing to some constraints this was not implemented. He emphasized the need to adapt global concepts and definitions to the African situation in order to measure the correct and prevailing phenomena in Africa. He finally indicated that reference to UN manuals included the IMF, World Bank and all agencies associated with the United Nations.

G. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

(Agenda Item 7)

151. The consultant introduced Part III on the implementation of the strategy. He stressed that other programmes had been unsuccessful because their implementation had not been properly planned. This Part was separated into Chapters on transitional arrangements, as some countries and international agencies were in the course of carrying out programmes which should not be interrupted, and into actions to be taken at national, subregional and regional as well as global levels. The implementation of the strategy was not supposed to disrupt ongoing work, but to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the new order. It would, however, not be useful to enter, before the future strategy was evolved, into new arrangements which would commit the various actors on a long-term basis.

152. Among the steps to be taken at the national level he suggested that the head of the NSS should approach the responsible Minister

to appoint a Needs Assessment Team (NAT). A time limit of six months should be given to the NAT for submitting of its report. At the sub-regional and regional levels, an inter-agency group should be set up which could assume the role of a programme steering committee. Institutions like ADB, ECOWAS and PTA should consider funding the programme as they would be key beneficiaries of improved statistics. AFSA should become part of the process of implementation.

153. At the global level, the ACC Sub-Committee on statistical activities should be informed by ECA on the existence of the strategy and the requirements for its implementation. UNDP should consider the establishment of a Special Fund for Statistical Activities. Even though such a proposal had been rejected in 1978, greater appreciation existed now for statistics within the donor community. The consultant reiterated the need for donors to take national priorities fully into consideration.

154. The participants further congratulated the consultant for his excellent work on this part of the report. A number of editorial comments were however made which would strengthen and clarify the text. They were noted by the Secretariat. This also pertained to the suggested inclusion of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in the list of sub-regional bodies to be involved.

155. A suggestion was made to reduce the time for the preparation of the report by the NAT from six to two months and to fit it into the preparatory phase for the budget session. It was also proposed to state in the report that the Government "should", and not "may", approve the report before it is sent to donors. There was a need for a national donors conference chaired by UNDP or the World Bank. The reports of bilateral and multilateral agencies should be updated to reflect the situation in countries.

156. It was suggested to refer to medium as well as to long-term plans of 5-10 years in the text. ECA should make every effort to start its initiative to implement the strategy immediately.

157. A question was asked whether the eminent person in charge of the NAT should be politically or technically eminent. It was felt that the NSS should play an important role as outsiders were usually not sufficiently familiar with the details of statistical work. The background documents for the NAT would have to be prepared by the NSS. The same would apply for the Technical Advisory Teams (TAT).

158. The Chairman clarified that he understood the document as calling for the NSS to act as a Secretariat to the various national bodies to be established. This was confirmed by the consultant.

159. The view was expressed on the need to include the Director of Statistics in the NATs and TATs. On the resources issue, participants were reminded that NSSs were just one service being considered in budget negotiations. It should be stressed that resources obtained for statistics within the context of a larger project should be strictly used for developing statistics and not, as had happened in some cases before, diverted to other areas.

160. An appeal was made to all participants to truly commit themselves to implementing this strategy and not make this yet another unimplemented document. ECA was urged to assist heads of NSSs in the implementation by communicating to the respective ministers that a strategy had been drawn up which required the establishment of NATs. ECA should also consider to assist countries in setting up NATs.

161. The representative from FAO urged proper co-ordination to ensure that all agencies would be aware of the strategy and steps towards its implementation. When contacting FAO's Head Office in Rome, the Regional Office in Accra should be simultaneously involved. He felt that the implementation scheme relied too heavily on the UNFPA example and that other agencies' experience should be taken into consideration as well. Regarding the Special Fund, he informed the participants that FAO had also been given the mandate to approach UNDP for a Special Fund for Agricultural Statistics.

162. The participants noted that it was apparent that statistical development would only be possible in the context of an overall improvement of the public sector. Regarding the future of technical co-operation it was stressed that while co-ordination would need to be taken further this would not mean a fusion of various donors' activities. It needed to be emphasized that a lot of successful work had been undertaken and that also development goals had been fulfilled. For the implementation of the strategy additional resources should be made available. However, scepticism was expressed about obtaining resources for a Statistical Development Fund. Some donors like ODA would prefer to commit themselves on a country-by-country basis.

163. A suggestion was made to include the Central Banks of West and Central Africa as possible source of support in implementing the strategy. It would also be necessary to determine whether this implementation requires the search for additional resources from the country budgets or such funds should be negotiated entirely with donor agencies.

164. The meeting was urged to take suggestions made in Part II into consideration in the revision of Part III. It was emphasized that the strategy should not be seen as a monolithic scheme for just one actor. Instead, various players and actions were envisaged. Follow-up actions needed to be further specified, especially whether transitional arrangements would also apply at the subregional and regional levels and the exact nature of the programme mentioned in the Consultant's presentation. The handling of non-statistical programmes with heavy statistical implications should also be discussed. The need to consider the issue of the adequacy or otherwise of existing sub-regional and regional capacity to handle any recommended strategy was stressed, taking into consideration various subregional and regional initiatives which have implications for statistics.

165. Some participants felt that the implementation modalities of the strategy were too strongly oriented towards Needs Assessments and that the organizational structures were too burdensome. The NAT could, for example, include the Technical Advisory Committee as its technical branch. In addition to this technical arm a political committee should also be considered. Rather than considering the document itself as a strategy one should see it as a reference framework which countries at different levels of statistical development could use.

166. Some participants considered the proposed structure at the national level to be too bureaucratic. In general, the emphasis should be on involving existing key institutions with established mandates, and not individual persons. If the initiative for the Needs Assessment came from the Head of the National Statistical Office it could enhance its status. It was also emphasized that clearance from the political wing would need to be obtained.

167. The representative of the World Bank reiterated the statement made by ODA that statistical development needed to be seen within an overall context. At a time when the World Bank was working with countries to retrench and to cut the civil service, it would be difficult to obtain support unless statistical development, as was the case with SDA, became part of the overall reform programme. The strategy as proposed by the Consultant should be tested in 2-3 countries over a 2-3 year period. There was no doubt that it constituted a sensible approach and the results should be used to convince donors of its usefulness.

168. In his response to the comments made on Part III the Consultant explained that he had deliberately maintained a level of generality in order to make the strategy and its implementation applicable in different countries. While he wanted to see NSSs functioning as Secretariats to the NATs, it would be counter-

productive to statistical development if Heads of NSSs would chair these bodies. He stated that he intentionally had chosen the word "may" instead of "should". The choice of countries should be determined by self selection and not from outside. The Inter-Agency Group should develop terms of reference and guidelines and work towards the development of programmes. Once programmes were approved it could be converted into a Programme Steering Committee. Note was taken of FAO's initiative to secure funds from UNDP for agricultural statistics. He assured the participants that in the revised document research and training would be further highlighted as important elements of the strategy.

169. The consultant wished to draw the attention of participants to a few general issues: In addition to the regional programmes mentioned in the first paragraphs of Part II, initiatives such as the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAP), the United Nations Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) and the Inter-agency Programme to Monitor Achievement of Social Goals would also need to be taken into account as they all had data implications. The revision of the document would be carried out by the Secretariat in the light of the recommendations of the Working Group and a certain amount of interpretation and rearrangement would thus be necessary. The debate on some issues had, however, not yet yielded clear recommendations. An example was the role of women in statistics. It would be unfortunate if only international agencies were to follow-up and if no action was specified and taken at the national level.

170. The Chairman supported the points made by the consultant and opened the debate on the follow-up and further recommendations. It was stressed that the participants should give guidance to the Secretariat regarding the revision and follow-up, particularly which role the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers was expected to play. It was also proposed to alert the Ministers of Planning to ensure effective follow-up.

171. A concern was expressed that the proposed process of the implementation of the strategy would take two to three years before the approval of a national strategy was obtained, taking also into account that policy makers might change and the strategy might have to be newly explained. Participants also urged for specificity as to how the strategy would fit into on-going and already planned programmes at the national and global levels.

172. Regarding the implementation of the strategy, it was proposed to assign it to the NSS as planners tended not to be interested in the details of data production. It was inquired whether monitoring of the success of the strategy was foreseen, on an annual basis as well as over the decade. While capacity-building in itself was difficult to measure, the quantity and quality of published

statistics were ultimate and measurable aims to achieve. The minister in charge of statistics should become aware of a serious effort being undertaken as only the incorporation of the strategy into national programmes would give it prospects for success. On the issue of political interference, it was observed that the involvement of a government committee in census matters helped to increase the confidence and to get the results quickly approved. It was suggested that ECA should request country reports on the implementation of the strategy.

173. Some participants wished to see the topic of data dissemination further discussed. It was also urged to make recommendations on how political pressure could be alleviated from the NSS as there were cases when statistical data were not released as they were not palatable to governments. It was considered that the insistence by all interested parties, including donors and subregional and regional institutions, on the timely release of statistical information was the best way to curb political interference.

174. Some new guidelines for technical assistance were proposed. It should be pointed out that technical assistance should dwindle over time. In order to bring the experience of different language groups together, a newsletter should be envisaged. To increase public awareness for statistics, Niger had started to experiment with the promotion of Statistics Day.

175. It was stated that the document should be considered as an overall framework. The implementation remained the responsibility of each country and was dependent on the resources available. Needs Assessments would help to set the proper priorities. There was no problem in taking three years to finalize the strategy as accumulating experience could be taken into account.

176. On the role of women in statistics, it was proposed that each country should carry out an evaluation on the participation of women in their statistical system. At the substantive level, health personnel knew best how to carry out surveys and censuses related to women. The statistical assessment of the contribution of women to the national product required to be tackled. In order to increase the participation of women in the field of statistics the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the representative of the University of Ibadan should be invited to make proposals. At the subregional and national levels, initiatives such as ACBI should emphasize the incorporation of women's issues, indicating the portion of the budget dedicated to supporting the role of women. Quotas of, for example, 30 per cent of the budget, should be

instituted. The same criteria should be applied to the elaboration of the National Long-term Perspective Studies (NLTPS).

177. The importance of women's participation in all areas of public life was stressed. Not just in developing but also in developed countries much was left to be desired. In INSEE, for example, there was not a single woman among the top ten of management. The educational system should support that women develop an interest for statistics. It was observed that quotas for women in the recruitment of students by the statistical training centres did not seem realistic and that admission at these centres should be based essentially on academic criteria. However, special efforts could be made to promote statistical training to secondary and university students. Regarding political interference in data production, it was stated that the political nature of population censuses needed to be acknowledged. If manipulations occurred, statisticians would have to rather resign than accept alterations.

178. Elements for a training strategy which would allow more women to work in the area of statistics were specified. The motivation had to start at secondary schools, where statistics should be taught as a subject and not just as an attachment to mathematics. Some participants agreed with a quota system for admission at the tertiary level. It was specified that at the moment only 20 percent of qualified students were admitted due to capacity constraints. With quotas one could raise the proportion of women within the 20 percent of admissions without any lowering of standards. A regional fund for the training of women in statistics was requested for. Quotas may also be needed in employment where 25-30 percent of jobs should be earmarked for women. The same applied to the inclusion of women in meetings, advisory teams, etc where professional experience and exposure could be gained. AFSA should include the issue of women in statistics at its next Scientific Conference.

179. The delegate of Zambia recounted his country's experience of enhancing the role of women in administration, e.g. by creating a department of Women in Development, as well as efforts made to improve the statistical coverage of women's activities. He indicated that a survey on women in the informal sector was planned for 1992/93.

180. While supporting the idea of increasing the role of women in statistics some participants considered that political action in favour of women could, however, affect the quality of statistical personnel. A suggestion was made that the issue of women in statistics should, in future, be taken up at the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers.

181. As regards the finalisation of the report of the meeting and the strategy document, some participants wanted to see the

documents amended by the Secretariat and then again reviewed by a small editorial group. Other participants suggested that the revised documents should be sent to countries for comments. Finally, participants expressed the view that ECA should finalize the strategy document and not present it again for discussion at the Joint Conference.

182. In reacting to the participants comments, the Secretariat explained that UNDP and ECA could jointly convene the meeting of the Inter-agency group. Regarding the revision of the report and the strategy document, a small team, including the Chairman and the Consultant, will convene subsequent to the Working Group to finalize the documents in light of the comments made. A formal request to participants was made that the revised documents should be the final document of the Working Group which would be submitted to the Joint Conference in 1992 and, subsequently, to the ECA Conference of Ministers. Implementation of the strategy could, however, start immediately.

H. OTHER BUSINESS

(Agenda item 8)

183. Under this agenda item, three issues relating to the Second Scientific Conference of AFSA, the African Statistics Day and the appreciation of the work of the Consultant were considered.

184. First, Mr. Finalization Abdellatif, Current President of the African Statistical Association (AFSA), informed the participants that the Second Scientific Conference of the Association will be held in Rabat, Morocco, from 8-12 June 1992. He appealed to all African countries to send as many qualified participants as possible to this important Conference and to international organizations and donor agencies to provide financial support for the organization of the meeting.

185. In reply to a proposal for an additional topic for the Conference on the role of women in statistical development, it was indicated that this topic had already been considered by the First Scientific Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1989 and that the list of topics had been decided at a meeting organized during the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers in January 1990.

186. On the second issue, the Secretariat urged all ECA member states to undertake the necessary preparations for the celebration of the African Statistics Day, which is the 18th of November, in order to increase public awareness for the important role which

statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life. In this connection, a number of participants suggested that ECA should play a leading role in this celebration, as it is the case, for example, of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the World Population Day.

187. Finally, the participants in the Working Group unanimously congratulated Mr. K.T. de Graft-Johnson, the ECA Consultant, for the excellent document which he had produced on the draft Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s.

I. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Agenda item 9)

188. The Working Group meeting adopted its report and a strategy for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s.